

# SC438648

Registered provider: Benecare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. The home is operated by a private organisation. At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

There has been no registered manager at the home since 15 December 2021.

### Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 16 August 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/08/2022	Full	Good
09/05/2022	Full	Inadequate
01/09/2021	Full	Good
03/03/2020	Full	Requires improvement to be good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The children receive individualised care and support. The care children receive from the staff is nurturing and consistent.

The manager ensures that the assessment process prior to a child moving into the home is thorough. The children's plans, including risk assessments, are effective and are updated regularly. Staff know the children well and celebrate their good progress. This is routinely shared with the placing local authority.

The children live in a comfortable and spacious home. The staff provide support which adapts to the children's changing needs. The children are facing a great deal of change at present, with a change of school and plans to move back to foster care. This is having a destabilising effect on them, leading to an increase in risky situations. However, staff manage this well and the support and care provided continues to meet children's needs.

The relationships between the staff and children remain good, despite some changes to the staff team, including a change of manager. This unsettled the children, but the remaining core staff provide the children with genuine care and affection. The atmosphere in the home is relaxed, and the children and staff enjoy spending time together.

The manager promotes the children's all-round needs. There are strong links with the network around the children, including their school and external therapeutic support. Consequently, the children are well supported and the manager and staff know what progress children are making, both inside and outside the home.

The children's views are captured during key-work sessions, and heard and acted on. There are clear protocols in place and the children know how to make a complaint, should they wish. One child designed their own complaint form template. The children are confident that staff will address their concerns and have been active participants in the complaints process.

The children in the home engage in a variety of activities. There is balance between structured and impromptu activity planning. The staff ensure that the one child who is not attending school regularly is kept busy and active.

Staff work hard to prepare children for the future. They encourage independence skills and secure therapeutic input to support the children to prepare for their planned move to a foster home. This is a challenge for the children and staff as time frames for these changes remain unknown.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The relationships between the children and staff are strong. The professional network around the children confirmed these relationships underpin the good-quality care the children receive. Even when in crisis, the children are able to reach out to staff and talk through their anxieties and fears. This provides them with reassurance. This has been more frequent of late as important relationships in the children's lives are coming to their natural end, destabilising the children's sense of security. The manager and staff understand this and regularly reassure the children of their commitment to them.

The staff identify, understand and manage risk effectively. The staff ensure the children's risk assessments are detailed and kept up to date. The latest copies of the risk assessments are held on the electronic records system. However, staff often use the paper files, which do not always contain the most up-to-date documents. Therefore, some staff may be unaware of any changes. The staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of the children and that they are unsettled as the academic year comes to an end. Consequently, the staff are extra vigilant at present.

There are few incidents of children going missing from home, partly due to the high level of supervision of the children. However, there are clear protocols in place to guide staff. When children do go missing, the staff respond effectively to keep them safe.

The manager is alert to the changing risks for the children and has arranged specific training for staff in response to this, such as managing harmful sexualised behaviours and self-harm.

Boundaries are regularly tested as the needs of the children become more complex. The manager and staff are reflective when speaking about the children, seeing the links between the children's feelings and outward behaviours. On occasion, the staff need to use physical restraint to safeguard the children or others. The staff are suitably trained in the particular technique used. Incidents of restraint are recorded appropriately. However, debriefs with the children are not consistently carried out in detail. This means that opportunities to help children and staff understand what led to the incident, and how it can be avoided in the future, are potentially missed.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The new acting manager who took up the post in May has yet to submit an application to register with Ofsted. As a previous peripatetic manager, she knows the staff and children well. She has a clear ambition and vision for the home and understands the strengths and areas for development. She has a plan for how to address the challenges she faces, including updating records and securing a stable workforce.

The manager understands the needs of the children in the home. She is reflective and helps the staff better understand the impact of the often complex and diverse

backgrounds children in care come from. The manager is a strong advocate for the children, securing specialist support and maintaining links with their education providers.

Safer recruitment practices are in place to ensure that all suitability checks are completed before staff begin work at the home. New and established staff feel well supported by the senior team. Regular formal supervision is supplemented with daily informal discussions.

Staff complete an extensive online training programme. However, some newer staff have yet to complete all the organisation's identified core training.

The home is meeting its stated aims and objectives. The home can accommodate three children, however, the manager is focused on supporting the two children already living there before introducing another child. This approach demonstrates strong and assertive management.

Records management is not consistently clear. Children's records are held as both electronic and paper files. Paper files continue to be relied on as important resources for permanent members of staff as well as agency workers. However, the paper files do not consistently contain up-to-date information. This has the potential to leave staff unclear as to whether they are using the most up-to-date document.

## What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(b)(c))</p> <p>In particular, ensure all staff complete all core training.</p>	<p>14 September 2023</p>

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that, following any use of restraint, children are given the opportunity to debrief about their experience of the hold, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and that children’s records are kept in a manner which ensures that staff access, and work from, the most recent version. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

### Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with The Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC438648

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Benecare Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Thatch Vine Farm, Stockers Hill, Boughton-under-Blean, Faversham, Kent ME13 9AB

**Responsible individual:** Patricia Clinton

**Registered manager:** Post vacant

## Inspector

Jane Balfe, Social Care Inspector

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